

General Management Plan Newsletter One June 2003

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Saguaro National Park
Arizona



Dear Friends,

As you know, Saguaro National Park is a remarkable resource that is part of daily life in the Tucson area. The park contains superb examples of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem, featuring exceptional stands of saguaro cacti, important wildlife habitat, mountain systems, and significant cultural resources.

The National Park Service (NPS) is undertaking a major effort, the development of a general management plan (GMP), to plan for the future of Saguaro National Park. Developing the general management plan is an opportunity to establish a vision for use and management of Saguaro National Park for the next 15 to 20 years. Planning for the park's future must consider past changes and anticipate future challenges. Growing populations, new technologies, changing land uses, and diverse visitor preferences affect management decisions. The draft general management plan will present different ideas (called

alternatives) for protecting the resources, meeting the needs of visitors, and addressing public concerns. The plan will be combined with an environmental impact statement (EIS) that will analyze the impacts of implementing each of the alternative ideas for future management of the park.

In developing this management plan, the National Park Service will work closely with international, federal, state, and local agencies; tribes; interested parties; and the general public to identify common interests and goals and ways to collaborate. Developing partnerships with others can offer creative and efficient ways to achieve our future goals at Saguaro National Park.

We need your participation in this very important project to help guide the park's management. Please join us in this effort. After reading this newsletter, please use the enclosed response card to share your thoughts about the park and get your name on the

GMP mailing list. We will keep you informed throughout the planning process with public meetings, newsletters, postings on the Internet, and the draft plan. If you have comments or questions at any point during this process, please feel free to contact us.

We appreciate your interest in Saguaro National Park and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Sarah Craighead
Superintendent

**General Management Plan
Saguaro National Park
3693 South Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, Arizona 85730-5601**

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E-mail: SAGU_Planning@nps.gov

**Park home page:
<www.nps.gov/sagu/index.htm>**

**NPS Planning home page:
<planning.nps.gov/plans.cfm>
and click on Plans, then select
Saguaro National Park**



WHAT IS A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN?

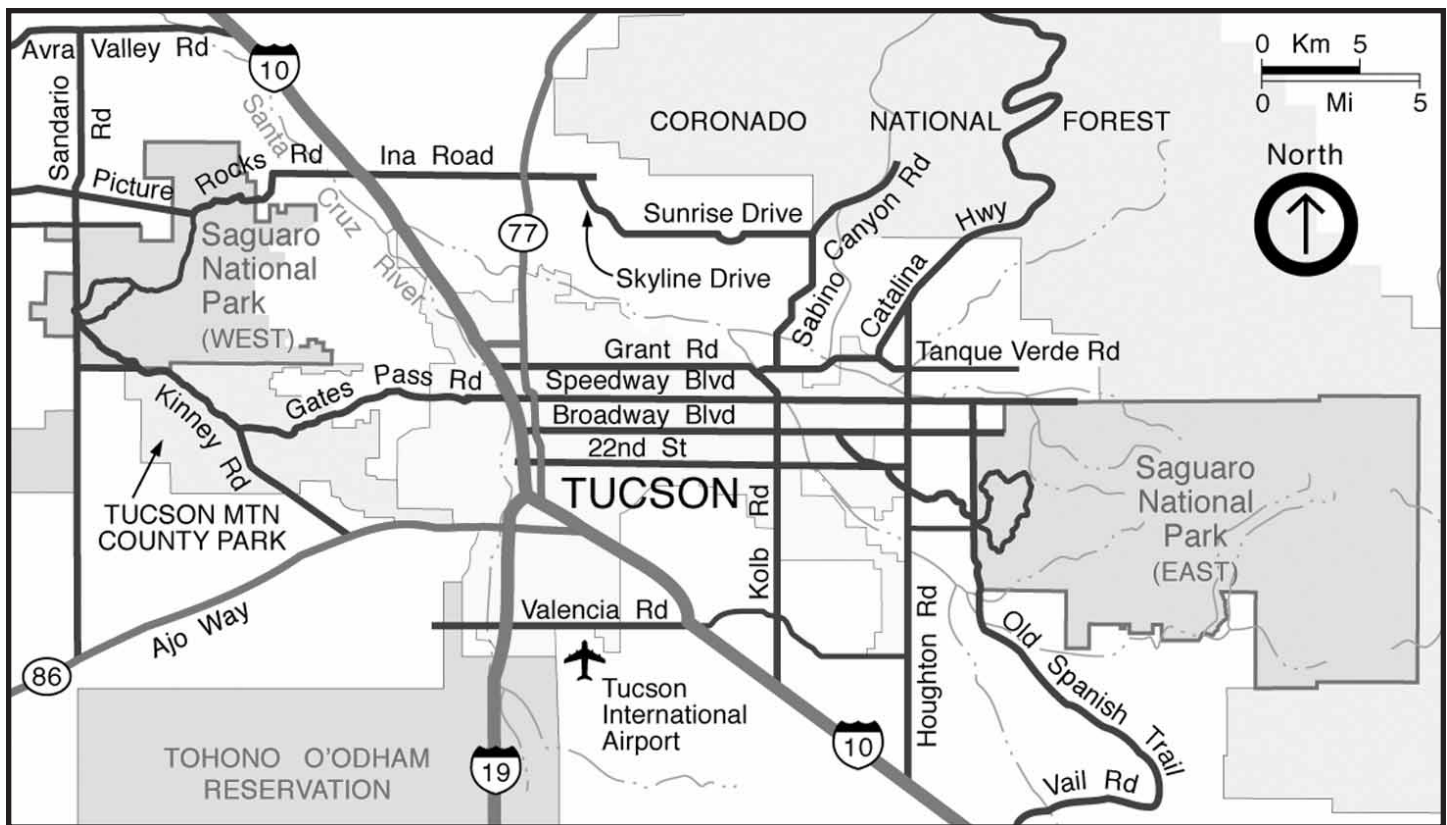
A general management plan provides a foundation to help park managers guide programs and set priorities for resource stewardship, visitor understanding and appreciation, partnerships, and facilities and operations for the next 15 to 20 years. The planning process focuses on why the park was established and results in a vision shared by NPS managers

and the public about the kinds of resource conditions and visitor experiences that will best fulfill the purpose of the park over time.

In prescribing the conditions and experiences to be achieved and maintained in the park, general management planning takes the long view, which may be decades into the future when dealing with the time frames of natural and cultural processes. The park is analyzed as a whole and as a part

of larger ecological, cultural, and socioeconomic systems. The analysis includes current public use patterns and the condition of sensitive cultural and natural resources. This comprehensive approach includes coordination with park partners, other land managing agencies, and the public to help ensure that the decisions made through general management planning are widely supported and sustainable over time.





General management plans direct park managers to focus their activities on achieving the conditions and experiences prescribed by the plan, but they generally stop short of directing specific activities, recognizing that managers may have to continuously adapt their activities based on changing information or influences.

throughout this process. The following is a list of the general steps of the GMP process.

- 1 Project Startup
- 2 Identify the Planning Context
- 3 Develop and Evaluate Alternatives
- 4 Prepare and Publish the *Draft General Management Plan* /

Environmental Impact Statement (DGMP/EIS)

- 5 Revise and Publish the *Final General Management Plan* / *Environmental Impact Statement* (FGMP/EIS)
- 6 Implement the Approved Plan

(Please see the planning activity schedule on page 7.)

MAJOR STEPS IN THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Producing a general management plan involves many steps and will take about three years to complete. The management plan process for Saguaro National Park is just beginning. The park staff and technical specialists from NPS offices in Denver, Colorado, form the planning team for the general management plan. The planning team will be working with the public, government agencies, and other stakeholders



PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

The planning team has developed the following park purpose and significance statements and primary interpretive themes.

Purpose Statements

Purpose statements provide the foundation for the management and use of each unit of the national park system; they also reaffirm the reasons why each area was established as a unit of the national park system. These statements help neighbors, visitors, cooperating agencies, and other users understand the framework in which park managers make decisions.

The following purpose statements have been refined over time and are based on Saguaro's establishing legislation as well as laws and policies governing management of all national park system units.



- Preserve and protect the saguaro cactus and the diverse vegetation and wildlife habitat of the surrounding Sonoran Desert.
- Preserve and protect the mountain and riparian habitats associated with the Sonoran Desert in the Tucson and Rincon Mountains.
- Preserve and protect wilderness qualities such as solitude, natural quiet, scenic vistas, and natural conditions.
- Promote understanding and stewardship of the park's natural and cultural resources through appropriate scientific study.





- Provide opportunities to understand and enjoy Saguaro National Park in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of park resources and wilderness character.

Significance Statements

Significance statements build on the park's purpose and clearly state why, within a national context, the park's resources and values are important enough to warrant the designation of a national park. These statements identify the resources and values that are central to managing the area and express the importance of the area to our natural and cultural heritage. The following are the significance statements for Saguaro National Park.

- The saguaro cactus biotic community in the park is a superb example of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem because of the density and many generations of saguaro cacti.
- The saguaro is the tallest cactus in the United States, and its distinctive form is recognized worldwide as an icon of the American Southwest.
- The park contains abundant evidence of a wide range and long history of human interaction with the land, and has enormous potential for teaching contemporary people about adapting to and thriving in an arid environment.
- The park contains the largest roadless Sky Island in the Sonoran Desert, encompassing

a wide range of elevations, which support extraordinary biodiversity within a small geographic area.

- The juxtaposition of Saguaro National Park and a large urban community provides for easily accessed wilderness experiences and extensive educational opportunities.



Primary Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are ideas, concepts, or stories that are central to the park's purpose, significance, identity, and visitor experience. The primary interpretive themes define concepts that every visitor should have the opportunity to learn. Primary themes also provide the framework for the park's interpretation and educational programs, influence the visitor experience, and provide direction for planners and designers of the park's exhibits, publications, and audiovisual programs. Below are the primary interpretive themes for Saguaro.

- The grand and mysterious saguaro cactus engages our imagination with its immense size, longevity, and fascinating biology as well as its cultural significance and humanlike qualities.
- Inhabiting the Sonoran Desert for centuries has required different peoples to adapt to this environment and has led to impacts and changes to the desert resources.
- As a unit of the national park system, Saguaro National Park preserves and protects thousands of acres of wilderness, offering recreation, learning, and spiritual renewal amid the impacts of an exploding urban center. All who enjoy Saguaro National Park play a role in the stewardship of this unique resource.
- From lush Sonoran Desert to mixed coniferous forest, an incredible diversity of plant and animal life is exemplified in Saguaro National Park.



- The plants and animals of Saguaro National Park have developed a variety of fascinating physical features, physiological mechanisms, and special behaviors to adapt to and survive in the arid environment of the Sonoran Desert.
- An amazing variety of unique and complex geological processes created the land forms of the park and the surrounding region.

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

The next step of the process involves collecting your ideas and concerns for managing the park. Your involvement throughout the process is a key component in the success of the general management plan. Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed comment form and return it to

the NPS planning team by August 4, 2003. Your thoughts and concerns provide valuable information on the goals and issues to be addressed in the document. Over the course of the project you will have several other opportunities (through newsletters and meetings) to share your concerns, ideas, and comments. You will receive future newsletters containing meeting times, dates, and locations.

Please plan to attend one of the initial planning meetings/workshops in July to find out more about this planning project. During these meetings, we would like you to meet some of the park staff and planning team and to express your ideas about the park. The meetings will be held as open houses from 3:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M., with formal presentations by the superintendent of Saguaro National Park given at 3:30 P.M. and 6:30 P.M. The open house

meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, July 23, 2003 and Thursday, July 24, 2003. Please see the box on the back page for meeting locations.

For more information about the planning process and park issues, you can contact the park using the mailing address, phone number, E mail address, or web sites shown on page 1. Please be aware that due to public disclosure requirements, the National Park

Service, if requested, is required to make public the names and addresses of commenters. This typically occurs in sites in which there is considerable controversy regarding park plans. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. The National Park Service will then determine whether the information can be withheld under the Freedom of Information Act, and we will

honor your request to the extent allowed by law.

We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or business, available for public inspection in their entirety.



STEP	PLANNING ACTIVITY	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
1	Project Startup. Assemble planning team, determine the scope of the project, design the process for carrying out the project, determine issues and concerns, and gather and analyze information. <i>October 2002 thru June 2003</i>	Completed
2 <i>We are here</i>	Identify the Planning Context. Reaffirm the purpose, significance, and primary interpretive themes and continue to gather and analyze information. <i>April 2003 thru August 2003</i>	Read newsletter #1 and send us your comments; attend public meetings.
3	Develop and Evaluate Alternatives. Develop a reasonable range of alternative futures for the park. <i>September 2003 thru November 2004</i>	Read newsletter #2 and send us your comments; attend public meetings.
4	Prepare and Publish the Draft GMP/EIS. The Draft GMP/EIS will be prepared and distributed for public review. The draft documents will describe the planning context, management alternatives, and impacts. <i>December 2004 thru April 2006</i>	Read Draft GMP/EIS and send us your comments; attend public meetings.
5	Revise and Publish the Final GMP/ EIS. Appropriate changes will be made to the draft document based on public comments, environmental analysis, and other information. The Final GMP/EIS will be distributed, and a "Record of Decision" will be signed. <i>May 2006 thru October 2006</i>	Read Final GMP EIS.
6	Implement the Plan. After the "Record of Decision" is issued, the management direction in the plan will be carried out as funding allows. <i>November 2006 on</i>	

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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Wednesday, July 23, 2003

East Side Location:

Pima Community College - East
Community Room
8181 E. Irvington Road
Tucson, AZ 85709
3:00P.M. - 8:00P.M.
Near the east main entrance

Thursday, July 24, 2003

West Side Location:

Pima County Natural Resources
Parks & Recreation Facility
3500 West River Road
Tucson, AZ 85741
3:00P.M. - 8:00P.M.
On River Road, south of Orange
Grove Road there is an exit from
I-10 at Orange Grove. River Road
turns into Thornydale on the
north side of Orange Grove.



Thank you for your interest in Saguaro National Park!

Comment Form

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Saguaro National Park
Arizona



We would like to have your thoughts on the following questions. Feel free to attach additional sheets as needed. After completing your comments, please fold this form in the middle and tape it closed. No postage is necessary. You can also comment at planning.nps.gov/plans.cfm and click on Plans, then select Saguaro National Park in the list of parks.

1. What makes Saguaro National Park special to you?
2. If you have visited Saguaro National Park, what did you enjoy most about your visit(s) to the park?
3. If you have visited Saguaro National Park, what did you enjoy least about your visit(s) to the park?
4. Imagine you are walking through the park in 20 years; describe what you would like to see and not see.
5. What opportunities and/or management would you like to see explored in the general management plan for Saguaro National Park?
6. What is your greatest concern about the future of Saguaro National Park?
7. Additional comments or concerns.

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Do you wish to remain on the mailing list concerning Saguaro National Park GMP? YES____ NO____

Please affix your mailing label or print your name and address in the space provided below. If the mailing label we used is incorrect, please indicate any corrections in the space below.

To help us keep our mailing list accurate and up to date, please check the appropriate boxes below.
Thank you for your assistance.

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Organization, if any: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

- ☐ The name or address you have is incorrect; (please change it as indicated above or see affixed mailing label).
- ☐ Add me to the mailing list.
- ☐ Remove my name from the mailing list.
- ☐ For this comment form, please withhold my name and/or address from the public record to the extent allowed.
- ☐ I would prefer to receive email notification that newsletters and updates are available on the Internet.
(please provide both your mailing address and your e mail)

E mail _____

Please fold this form in half, showing the National Park Service preprinted address on the outside, tape it closed (no staples please), and drop it in the mail. Should you have any questions on the planning process, please call Mary McVeigh at 303.969.2360 or e mail: mary_mcveigh@nps.gov.

Thank you for your interest in Saguaro National Park!